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CONTROLLING NUCLEAR WEAPONS
AND PREVENTING ARMS PROLIFERATION
IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

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COMMITTEE 5
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The disintegration of the former Soviet Union is often celebrated in the West as a victory of democratic ideals and institutions over a repressive communist regime. The collapse of communism in the Soviet Union is definitely worth heralding, but it's important to note that the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) imposes new challenges on the West. These challenges are abundant and they fall into all the categories that impact Western interests: economic, political, and national security. Looking specifically at national security interests, the West needs to pay close attention to current CIS military capabilities--particularly the status of centralized control over CIS nuclear forces and the drawdown of those forces. Equally important is the need to monitor an emerging tendency for CIS states to market military capabilities abroad. This paper will analyze both of these issues and argue that the United States must take the lead in ensuring the CIS acts responsibly in confronting the issues of nuclear control, nuclear drawdown and proliferation of weapons and military technology.

With the break-up of the Soviet Union and a general relaxation in east-west tensions, there is some sentiment within the United States to take a less active role in world affairs. The relatively poor condition of the United States' economy exacerbates this tendency towards a new era of semi-isolationism. While we must put our domestic house in order, we cannot ignore the ramifications of a CIS that possesses poor centralized control over nuclear forces and is prone to proliferate nuclear and conventional weapons.

The most important outcome of the Soviet Union's collapse is the fact that the resultant fifteen independent states exist in an environment that is very unstable. The former Soviet Union operated under extremely centralized control which suppressed historic ethnic, nationalist and religious tensions. The

centralized control is now gone, but the tensions are not. The various republics mistrust one another and there is a growing tendency to compete on economic, political and military terms. Furthermore, there is strong resentment toward the republic of Russia which is perceived as attempting to dominate the CIS. From the United States' standpoint, the loss of centralized control and the resulting instability is particularly disturbing given the fact that the CIS is still a major nuclear and conventional power.

Strategic nuclear weapons exist in four CIS republics: Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus. For the United States, ensuring reliable centralized CIS control over these weapons is a vital national interest. The lack of a cohesive nuclear policy on the part of the CIS could theoretically result in scenarios such as inadvertent launch, accidents or terrorism. Fortunately, the four states officially established unified command and control of nuclear weapons in the December 1991 Minsk Agreement. This protocol also assigned nuclear launch authorization to the Russian President. The four republics have further agreed to assume obligations incurred by the former Soviet Union under the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). With the exception of Russia, the Republics have also committed themselves to join the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) as non-nuclear states. These developments are encouraging; but, in reality, the question of nuclear control is not completely resolved. The new states have learned that the possession of nuclear weapons increases their international status and serves to deter potential adversaries. As a result, they are prone to retreat on their previous commitments to pass centralized control to Russia. The United States must continue to closely monitor this situation and use economic and political leverage to ensure strong centralized control over nuclear weapons in the CIS--particularly within Ukraine, Kazakhstan

and Belarus as they move towards becoming non-nuclear.

Just as the new republics are moving slowly to ensure centralized control over nuclear weapons, they are also dragging their feet on disarmament. Both the Ukraine and Kazakhstan have sought a number of concessions from the United States in return for dismantling their nuclear apparatus. Since a continued CIS nuclear drawdown is definitely in the United States' national interests, it is imperative that we provide the proper incentives to encourage further nuclear dismantlement. The most effective tool in this regard is to tie economic assistance to CIS nuclear drawdown. Senators Nunn and Lugar began this process by providing \$400 million to the Ukraine to assist in dismantling its nuclear arsenal and offering an additional \$400 million for further compliance. If the United States is to meet its ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons from all Soviet republics except Russia, further economic initiatives along these lines are necessary. However, these initiatives, must include provisions that ensure the CIS recipients genuinely abide by previously agreed to dismantlement terms. If they violate these terms, then the economic assistance should end.

While on the subject of economic assistance, it's important to note that the United States should not stand alone in supplying payments to the CIS republics in return for nuclear drawdowns. The European Community (EC) has a vested interest in nuclear disarmament. The CIS states are on the EC's "front doorstep" and, in many respects, are more of a nuclear threat to Western Europe than they are to the United States. The CIS states' close proximity to the EC means they don't need sophisticated delivery systems to strike western Europe. Therefore, it is in Western Europe's best interests to support initiatives and provide funds designed to ensure the new CIS states become non-nuclear. Encouraging the western Europeans to take such actions should continue to stand

as an important goal of United States' foreign policy.

In addition to providing economic assistance for disarmament, the United States can encourage an atmosphere within the CIS where Russia provides the "nuclear umbrella" under which all states are protected. At the moment, long-range plans call for nuclear weapons on Russian soil only. However, as mentioned earlier, the other states resent Russian dominance and might choose to maintain their own nuclear arsenal to offset Russian influence. Through diplomatic efforts, the United States can encourage Russia to ensure its CIS neighbors that it does not intend to dominate the region. At the same time, the United States can seek to convince the other CIS states that it is much safer and less expensive to compete with Russia economically and politically rather than on military terms.

While ensuring the former Soviet Union's strategic nuclear forces are placed under strong, centralized control is paramount to United States' national security, limiting the proliferation of nuclear and conventional weapons is also a vital national interest. The instability within the CIS and the lack of centralized control over military forces create an atmosphere where it is difficult to prevent the spread of sophisticated weapons and associated technology within the region or to markets anywhere in the world. Moreover, the CIS is desperate for hard currency and its defense industries could easily become the chief means for obtaining that currency. The prospect of the CIS states non-discriminantly marketing weapons and technology to the highest bidder clearly is inconsistent with the United States' goal of maintaining world order. Weapons transfers to unstable regions such as the Middle East and certain areas of Asia could result in arms races within the regions which in turn could increase tensions between potential belligerents and result in armed conflict.

Weapons of mass destruction pose the greatest proliferation threat. To date, there have been some reports that Iran has purchased nuclear warheads from Kazakhstan, but these reports are unconfirmed. Fortunately, there is no hard evidence that the CIS has marketed any nuclear weapons. The marketing of conventional weapons, on the other hand, is occurring at a considerable rate. Originating mainly in Russia, these sales range from MIG-29s and SU-24 fighters to T-72 tanks to Kilo-class attack submarines. The importing states include Syria, Iran, India and China. Perhaps most disturbing, Russia has sold India two rocket boosters that India claims it will use for its commercial space program. Of course, the boosters could also serve as nuclear delivery systems. Along with the marketing of military hardware, there is a potential that highly trained scientists, well experienced in turning out sophisticated arms in the previous Soviet Union, might sell their services abroad. Injecting scientific expertise well versed in arms production into unstable regions could have the same undesirable effects as the introduction of weapons.

To counter CIS proliferation, the United States needs to implement a comprehensive plan that incorporates existing mechanisms designed to discourage arms transfers with new initiatives aimed specifically at the needs of the CIS states. Just as with the issue of centralized control and drawdown of CIS nuclear forces, the United States needs to enlist the support of Western Europe in combating proliferation. Japan should also participate since it is directly threatened from North Korea which could enhance its nascent nuclear capability by acquiring weapons and technology from CIS states.

Looking first at existing mechanisms, the United States should encourage all of the CIS states to join key protocols designed to discourage arms transfers. Regarding nuclear weapons of mass destruction, the major protocols

include the NPT, START and the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Non-nuclear accords include the Geneva Protocol, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Turning to conventional weapons, the key protocols include the Big Five arms sales talks, the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and the CoCom Cooperation Forum.

The first step in convincing the CIS states to join these protocols is education. This is especially true of the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus which do not have the experience in arms control and proliferation that Russia does. Furthermore, their distrust of Russia discourages them from seeking help from Russia. Educational assistance could consist of informing the new states of existing mechanisms and providing them with expert advice on implementation--to include technical support.

Once the CIS states are well informed of the mechanisms available, the next step is to promote their participation. This process can begin by explaining to the CIS states that as new members of the international community they have a responsibility to promote stability in the world and that exporting arms to unstable regions forsakes that responsibility. The United States (along with western Europe and Japan) could then combine this idealistic argument with a realistic proposal to tie economic aid to CIS adherence to non-proliferation accords. The United States could also encourage international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to make loans to CIS states contingent upon compliance with controls over arms transfers. This multilateral approach accomplishes two things--it curtails proliferation and it provides funds for economic development within the CIS states. It's important to remember that economic development is the primary goal of emerging CIS states. The best way to counter CIS proliferation is to attack the CIS states' proclivity

to market arms to meet their desire for hard currency to assist in building economic prosperity. Put simply, economic assistance is the key to constraining CIS proliferation.

In addition to encouraging CIS membership in existing mechanisms, the United States can take the lead in developing new initiatives tailored to the realities of the CIS states. Key initiatives include establishing national export controls within the new states, efforts to counter illegal proliferation, and programs to dissuade the migration of scientific expertise.

Looking first at national export controls, there is a need once again to educate. The new republics lack a national program that monitors and controls their inventory of weapons. The United States could provide technical assistance to develop a system where the CIS states can track the location of existing weapon systems and those in production.

Controls are also needed to contain a growing illegal market within the CIS states that is transferring weapons abroad. The most crucial need here is law enforcement--black markets and organized crime rings are flourishing in the former Soviet Union. Again, it is an issue of education. United States assistance programs should focus on providing expertise to law enforcement and customs officials on how to curb illegal arms traffic. This would include providing technological means to detect and apprehend the offenders.

Earlier in this paper the subject of former Soviet scientists migrating outside of CIS borders was raised. It is in the best interests of the West to discourage this migration. The United States, the EC, and Japan have established an International Science and Technology Center (ISTC) in Moscow and Kiev to employ former Soviet Nuclear scientists that might otherwise turn their efforts abroad. This is an innovative approach which the western powers should continue

to support--not just within the former Soviet Union but also in "friendly" Western nations.

Having outlined a plan for the United States' efforts to ensure centralized control and continued drawdown of former Soviet Union nuclear forces as well as the discouragement of CIS proliferation, it's worthwhile now to look at the strengths and weaknesses of the plan. Turning first to the nuclear command control and drawdown issue, the plan's basic strength relies upon the fact that the new CIS, particularly Russia, is much more interested in establishing economic reforms that will enhance domestic stability than it is in maintaining a nuclear threat aimed at the West. On the other hand, the new states (other than Russia) may decide to maintain a nuclear arsenal to enhance their standing on the world stage and to serve as a deterrent to what they consider an encroaching Russia.

Regarding the issue of non-nuclear proliferation, the plan outlined in this paper also contains strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, the plan recognizes that overcoming the inherent instability in the new CIS is the root of all concerns. The new states will respond to incentives--mostly economic--that will improve their lot in life. The plan also focuses on all CIS states equally--it doesn't favor a particular state. This is very important given the new CIS states' mistrust of Russia.

On the negative side, the new CIS states may reject international controls on the export of conventional weapons. Just as with nuclear arms, the regional concerns that exist in the CIS could result in a desire on the part of the newer states to maintain their existing conventional weapons and arms production facilities. In particular, this will occur if the new CIS states do not find alternative means of acquiring hard currency.

Regardless of its potential strengths and weaknesses, this plan addresses two issues that are paramount to the United States' national security. The first is that centralized control and continued dismantlement of nuclear weapons within the CIS states must undergo strict enforcement. The second, a parallel concern, is that CIS exports of nuclear and conventional arms have the potential to destabilize many regions of the world. The United States cannot ignore either of these issues. It must take the leading role among allies to ensure world stability.

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